

" Friendship makes the rights of its object
" Equally matter of regard with its own,
" And marks a mind that is innocent
" Of the virtues which insure the happiness of human nature."

Bruce's Elements on the Science of Ethics.

" To be priz'd by an elegant mind ;
" To be lov'd where you love and admire ;
" Ah ! sure 'tis the summit of bliss
" The susceptible soul can desire."

SHENSTON'S ELEGIES.

" Oh ! sacred friendship, mild and gay,
" Who to the regions of the bless'd
" Has soar'd, and left mankind a prey
" To fraud, in thy resemblance dress'd :
" Auspicious hear, and hither send
" Thy sister truth, with radiant eyes,
" To brand the false professing friend,
" Detected in the fair disguise.
" Oh ! come thyself, and re-inspire
" The purpose, candid and humane,
" Else peace and order will retire,
" And horror and confusion reign.
" For what are all delights below,
" Which *Fortune, Honor, Fame* bestow,
" Unless with these we strive to blend
" The social solace of a friend.
" The flow of youth, the charms of love,
" But momentary transports prove ;
" Friendship alone secures content,
" More placid, but more permanent."

DELLA CRUSCA.



VIRTUTI NIHIL INVIUM.



SAILORS' LETTERS.



Letters from a Midshipman in the Royal Navy, to his Friend and Brother Officer, in various parts of the world, from the year 1768 to the year 1777.

THE following Letters were written in the youthful effervescence of a warm, an animated, and a most exalted mind. They are the friendly correspondence of a young officer of the navy (whose manners were softened by a profession that tends to make bad men worse) to his friend and brother officer, (at a very early age) until the year 1777, in which year he lost his valuable life, and fell a sacrifice on the North American station, in the late unnatural rebellion; (and who, had it been the will of Heaven to have preserved him) would have been a great ornament to the profession he had embarked in; and, in my mind—(the brightest pattern of excelling nature) They breathe the spirit of a true, pure, and disinterested friendship and affection: His many virtues and talents will be engraven on the minds

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of

of all those who had the happiness of knowing him, and were sensible of his worth. I have, for private reasons, with-held the names of all those officers and gentlemen his friends and associates, through delicacy; (indeed many of them like himself) have paid the great debt of nature, in the unfortunate American war, (yet there are some living, and I trust will live long) most of them the writer of these lines is well acquainted with, to the merits of one *individual*, and the only name I have thought proper to put at full length, I cannot avoid being particular. He is now no more. I mean that excellent and amiable character the late Captain James King, of the Royal Navy, (whose public virtues, as a companion to the unfortunate Captain James Cook, in his circumnavigation of the Globe, are well known.) His sweetness of disposition, with all the mild virtues of humanity, shone with equal lustre in private life, as his talents and abilities did in the service of the public. He died a post-captain at Nice, in Italy, in the year 1785, where he had gone for the recovery of his health, impaired by his long voyage in the Southern Seas.

That the perusal of these juvenile letters may afford the same degree of pleasure to those few (into whose hands they may happen to fall) as they have done to the receiver of them, is the wish of *one* (who derives a ~~great~~ source of his happiness here, from its being reflected on him by others; and one, who
from



from the beneficence of Providence in showering down blessings on him far beyond his expectations or deserts, has left him little to be anxious for, and as little to fear,) enjoying with a contented mind what Mr. Pope deemed "reason's whole pleasure, health, peace, and competence."

This worthy young man, altho' bred to arms, yet would he often lament the cruel necessity of a *military life*, and detested war as the disgrace and calamity of human nature, frequently would he repeat to me the sentiments of Baron Bielfield. "What a horrible evil is it; if it procures to heroes an opportunity of adorning their brows with laurels, those laurels are constantly stained with human blood; which in my eyes tarnish all their lustre; and in what distressful situations are many peaceable citizens placed, in consequence of it. If men were born tygers—if their subsistence depended on their murderous exploits—if they were compelled to kill and destroy each other for their wants, and for their mutual advantages, then I should find a considerable degree of merit in warlike qualities, and a hero would appear in my eyes a very reasonable being : but as Divine Providence has dispensed to the whole human race all that is necessary to the support and subsistence of every man ; and as reason, the law of nature, and the positive laws of different nations, have granted a portion of those goods to every individual in society,

"ciety, so that no man, strictly speaking, can be
 "said to die for want; the abundance of the neces-
 "saries of life depends on the intercourse of man-
 "kind, and the calms of peace. It seems matter of
 "astonishment to me that *peace* is not regarded as
 "inviolable, or that war should ever take place
 "amongst men, and that the military profession
 "should not be banished the earth. The more I
 "think on the subject, the less am I able to discover
 "the natural disposition or acquired *talents* for kil-
 "ling or extirpating our fellow-creatures should be
 "considered as estimable qualities; or what the
 "folly of mankind has decorated with the specious
 "names of *valour* and *heroism*, has any just claim to
 "honor or applause. The whole is a kind of il-
 "lusion with which the *great* deceive the inferior
 "classes of mankind, in order to make them serve
 "as the instruments of their passions, and especially
 "of their ambition. What sight can be more
 "horrid than that of a country ravaged by war,
 "where nothing is to be seen but *fire* and *sword*,
 "*terror*, *confusion*, *despair*, and *death*. On the con-
 "trary, what sight can be more pleasing than that
 "of a country which is the residence of peace,
 "where every citizen enjoys the fruits of his la-
 "bours—where all talents are employed and en-
 "couraged—where arts, science, and commerce
 "flourish—and where the calm delights of social life
 "are enjoyed with cheerfulness and innocence."

Such

Such were the sentiments of my valued friend, and the following letters, fraught with philanthropy and benevolence, will better delineate his amiable character than any language I can paint him in.

LETTER I.

Rochester, December 17, 1768.

Many letters of my dear friend's, from Jamaica, I have this morning for the first time seen, during my absence on the coast of Labradore. They came here (where you know) I have been but a very short while. Your last I thank you for, but own it would have pleased me better had it given me hopes of being blest with your company in London. I grieve to at the cause which prevents my happiness, (your father's illness) I know the tenderness of your disposition, and the excessive sensibility of your soul; and I am sure you must be much affected at your poor father's situation. A man possessed of your goodness and virtue, could not be the offspring of a father devoid of them; and I shall grieve at his death, as well on your account, as from my belief that he will be a loss to the community. However, I hope that event is at a great distance. I thought before this time you would have been arrived at that great object of all our wishes, (a commission) however, do not despair, a war cannot be far distant. The crimes of this country must be punished by national calamities, and I think it is ripe for them. I
will

will now, in some degree, answer your Jamaica letters. I know when a person recollects past circumstances, some things may arise in his mind which gives pleasure; for which reason I will share in your happiness at Kingston, Tiberoon, and Bermudas, at all which places your heart felt the most agreeable of all sensations; but you are the most inconstant fellow breathing, no woman can promise herself the pleasure of your affections longer than till a new face presents itself; but it seems Bermudas was your scene of action, there you played the lover—happy fellow; I almost envy you even now, and do you know the ladies at **** House will not allow *****. You talk of *Social Place*. Why do you recall those pleasing ideas? I am tired of the noise and bustle of the world, and sigh for the calm pleasures of domestic life; but, my dear fellow, we should soon think even *Social Place* unsocial, without two other inhabitants besides ourselves. Two of those human angels whom kind Providence placed here to temper the natural roughness of mankind. Believe me, you and I without them shall ever find all human enjoyments empty and incomplete. England is not the place for us, we ought to fly from it and danger. I still think, as we used to do, that life is but a farce. Last year's contemplation at Labradore has made me more out of love with it than ever. A war, my dear friend, may probably put it more in our power
to

to enjoy something more of it than we have hitherto done. I. P. and I. D. with myself, were much together in town, and I was unfortunately under the cruel necessity of leaving it the morning of H. C's. arrival, and without seeing him too. Your last favor I received here, and since that have been in town, and came here again, or it should not have remained so long unanswered. I want to meet you and some others in London before a separation takes place, which perhaps may be an *eternal one*. Write to me soon. I believe you need no formal assurances that I love you with the same sincerity of affection I ever did, and trust my absence or length of time will never be able to weaken the friendship of my dearest, affectionate friend,

Your's ever,

R—— B——.

LETTER II.

Rochester, 1769.

Dear ——

I know not how to reconcile to my conscience that I have suffered your obliging and kind letter to remain so long unanswered, but I do assure you no pleasures or amusements have prevented it; in that case I should have been more culpable, because I ought not to have a greater pleasure than that of writing to my good old friend. I most heartily concur with you, that two months are sufficient in our way

way of life, to live on shore. To be sure, our situation is in every respect unpleasant ; though that it is so, is entirely owing to many in our own corps ; for, by *observation* and *experience* I am convinced, that other people in general are apt to measure and suit the respect they pay us, to that we pay ourselves. And I am confident, the midshipman who deserves respect, and who demands it, will always find it from his inferiors. It is a melancholy consideration that we must, if we appear like gentlemen, spend our whole fortune, if it is small, in the chace of preferment, and at last perhaps not arrive at it. It is a hardship, but it will appear less so, if we weigh every circumstance with attention. To bind you an apprentice to a tradesman or surgeon, or clerk to a lawyer, each eminent in their way, would require *four or five* hundred pounds. At the expiration of your term of servitude you enter into business ; but can you do it without another sum of money to set up with ? Can you practice as an attorney without having something to support you till you become known and eminent ? Suppose either of the three learned professions your choice, can you support yourself at school, at the university after leaving it, during the intermediate time between your obtaining much practice in the law or physic, or preferment in the church, without having a tolerable fortune ? A fortune much superior to that you are under the necessity of spending during your course
of

of service in the navy. And surely you do not put our situation as subalterns, on a footing with that of tradesmen's apprentices, or lawyers' clerks. Forbid it pride! the world do reflect on us probably, but the reflections of fools we can despise, and men of sense will not reflect on us, without knowing the service; and if they do know it, they cannot. I thank you for your compliment, and can only say without one, that were the goods of this life given to the most worthy, you have generosity, humanity, and charity, to entitle you to a very large share of them. I do not know as yet how I am to be disposed of, I have no prospect of *promotion*; and where I shall exist this year I have not yet determined on. I think if Captain H—— should be employed, your scheme of going with him an eligible one. He bears an amiable character. Let us be contented, my dear friend, and your good sense will make you less dissatisfied with our situation when we look around us, and see so many people who have served infinitely longer than either of us still unprovided for, and people not devoid of merit. Either happier prospects will open on us by and by, and we are to hope, that the longer we are before we are blessed with a commission, the speedier will be our rise from it to a command. Farewell, my good friend, and believe me always

Your's affectionately,

R—— B——.

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LETTER III.

A—— guardship, Portsmouth Harbour, 1770.

Do not upbraid me, my dear old friend, for my apparent want of affection in suffering your kind letter to remain so long unanswered. Various have been the causes—*discontent, listlessness*, and for a time sickness. My mind was utterly unhinged, and not fit for any thing. Believe me, I often and tenderly think of you as a friend, whose converse and society (would fortune permit it) should tend to make the bitter draught of life go down less nauseously, and inspire me with a fondness for the slavery of this nether prison. Indeed, I think with Pope and Swift, that Providence has so ordered it, that time and accident should separate us for a term, or for ever, from our friends, lest we should grow too fond of this *world*, and cast our looks no further. For surely, the enjoyment of a true, pure, and disinterested friendship, founded on virtue, is the greatest bliss human nature is capable of attaining. The reflection that I am happy in the esteem of some folks, who do honor to humanity, and who dignify their nature, is my great counterpoise for every ill fortune has had, or may have in store for me. What a catalogue could I produce, of men utterly different from the mass of mankind. My dear L——, you must some day or other know. Congenial souls should know and love each other. You may be right in your assertion, that the rubs of life are necessary

cessary to heighten our relish for the blessings of it; and perhaps had either of us been born to a great fortune, we should have had but a feint enjoyment of it, whereas now we shall have the true blissful enjoyment of riches acquired by accident. We have each of us too, in some degree, felt the iron hand of adversity. We have suffered fatigue, cold, and hunger; and from our own feelings, we shall know how to pity and relieve the distresses of others. In us chill penury and drooping indigence will, I trust, ever find friends and comforters. Be it our task, when fortune shall give us the means, to soothe the afflicted, and wipe away the tears of sorrowing misery. Here, my dear fellow, the rich are enviable. A mind, properly seasoned, can behold them wantoning in luxury, and revelling in the possession of every superfluous blessing (as they are called) without a spice of envy. They can smile at their assumed grandeur, their state and their equipage, and look down on the fawning herd of sycophants who crowd their levee; but when a man reflects that to them is granted

“ That bliss on earth, so little understood,

“ The godlike happiness of doing good.”

Then the scalding tears of discontent fill his swollen eyes, in grief of heart he curses the cruelty of fortune.

I have now taken up my quarters at Haslar Hospital. By no means well, yet not absolutely ill.
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The ship was disgustful to me. I was in perfect solitude amongst a crowd, and led a cold comfortless life. Solitude is still mine, but I have warmth, and am free from interruption. Virgil and Horace are the companions of my leisure hours, and they do not suffer me to throw away a sigh on the world. I have left, (for surely I am now out of the world) but cannot my imagination change the hospital into a palace, and raise myself into the lord of it? That madman was happy who supposed himself Jupiter. But I cannot take such flights. Pains in my head and limbs spoil my soaring, and pinion me down to earth. J—— H—— is a worthy honest man. Make my kind compliments acceptable to him, and tell him he is a very idle fellow. All his friends complain of him. It is rumoured there will soon be a naval promotion. If there should be one, I hope to see you included in it. It will be truly hard if you are not, and will give me a very poor opinion of the advantages arising from great connections, and relationship to men of quality. Indeed, no man of rank has interest but those who can serve the minister by their influence; and the son of a barber, shoe-maker, or butcher, whose relations have *votes* in a ministerial borough, shall arrive at promotion in any service, rather than the man of birth and merit, whose friends are impotent, or not inclined to support the measures of government. I hope the rainy season in your *blessed place* is over. Indeed I do think

think P***** is one of the most wretched dog-holes I ever was in, and I lament the cruelty of thy fate which keeps thee there. When you see your friend, I will thank you for some *franks*, directed to you; and if you can get them, (without giving yourself a pang, from the consciousness in being forward in asking for them) send me a few directed to Mrs. H——, at Portsmouth. And when you write again to Mr. ——, direct your letters thither. What is become of our air-formed *Social Place*? After the next war we may perhaps get there, when fortune shall enable us to live in independent retirement, and laugh at the knaves and fools that pester the world. I shall be happy to hear from you often, and should suppose you might pay us a visit when the summer comes on. H—— is here. He laments he was not here when last we met. G—— desires to be kindly remembered to you. I suppose you will be wandering in the delightful solitudes of M**** E*****, with some chosen fair one of your heart, next month, when nature pours out all her beauties, and will form the verdant bed for you to recline on, in luxuriant ease, and over-canopy you with jessamine and woodbine. Such happiness is denied

Your ever affectionate friend,

R—— B——.

LET.

LETTER IV.

A—— guardship, Spithead, July 13, 1770.

Fellowship in prosperity, fellowship in adversity, is the bond of friendship they say. My dear old friend, in that case, our's ought to be more strongly cemented than ever, and our affection for each other must have been growing, proportionably to the degree of suffering we have each gone through. A week since I went out of my bed-room for the first time these two months; but, my dear fellow, my ills have been nothing when compared to your's.

Alas, how frail is man! From a certain lady who lately left your part of the world, I enquired of you, and was told you was well, but still drank the *de-coction* of the *woods*. I wish I may not have fresh cause to begin anew the same regimen. Seriously, my good fellow, I begin to find I am a very poor creature, that no sentiments of religion, purity, or delicacy, have weight enough with me to counteract and subdue my ruling passion. But let us not be too severe on women. The path, my friend, from vice to virtue, is strewn with difficulties generally insurmountable; and many women would measure back their steps to virtue was there a possibility of succeeding. Let me refer you to poor *Lydiard* the *traveller*, (on the many virtues of the *sex*.) “I have always remarked” (says this indefatigable *man*) “that women in all countries are civil, obliging, tender,

“tender and humane; and that they are ever in-
 “clined to be gay and cheerful, timorous and mo-
 “dest; and that they do not hesitate (like men) to
 “perform a generous action; not haughty or arro-
 “gant, or supercilious. They are full of courtesy,
 “and fond of society; more liable in general to err
 “than man, but in general more virtuous, and per-
 “forming in general more good actions than he.
 “To a woman, whether civilized or savage, I never
 “addressed myself in the language of decency and
 “friendship, without receiving a decent and friendly
 “answer. With man it has been often otherwise.
 “In wandering over the inhospitable and barren
 “plains of Denmark, through honest Sweden, and
 “frozen Lapland, rude and churlish Finland, un-
 “principled Russia, and the wide-spreading regions
 “of the wandering Tartar, if hungry, dry, wet, cold
 “or sick, the women have ever been friendly and
 “kind to me, and uniformly so; and to add to this
 “virtue, so worthy the appellation of benevolence,
 “their actions have been performed in so free and
 “so kind a manner, that if I was dry I drank the
 “sweetest draught, and if hungry eat the coarsest
 “morsel with a double relish.” (I am sure, my
 friend, you will not be displeased at this digression)

Perhaps I am presumptuous in asking you to
 write, when I have been so long silent. You know
 C——’s a lieutenant in India. Our old friend T——
 is well, I have heard from him lately, he spoke af-
 fectionately

fectionately of thee. I wish you could come here a little while, but the pleasure of public rooms, plays, &c. &c. have, I fear, gotten too fast hold of you. Excuse my not writing before, and think me, in spite of appearances,

Your most sincere and affectionate friend,

R—— B——.

LETTER V.

A—— guardship, Portsmouth, 5th Sept. 1770.

Mr. —— should have brought you an answer to your last, my dear friend, and I should have reserved the frank to have again conveyed to you the friendly effusions of a heart that sincerely and unalterably loves you; but his going was sudden, and by me unknown. He is a worthy young man, pray make my compliments of remembrance to him. The countenance for once speaks the heart in my friend † *King*; for in all God's creation there exists not a soul with more benevolence, goodness, sensibility, and all the mild virtues of humanity, than he possesses. He is worthy yourself, and worthy the few exalted men, who I exult and triumph in being able to call my friends. Your term of sorrow will, I believe, be soon completed, and joy and pleasure will succeed in your breast the gloomy inhabitant. All things promise an approaching war, consequently promotion to folks in our way; and on promotion attends

† The late Captain James King, circumnavigator with Capt. Cook.

attends the chance of wealth and fame, the objects which engross the attention, and engages the pursuit of all mankind. But alas, thou soul of philanthropy and benevolence ! art not thou frozen with horror when the reflection of our rise being founded on the public calamity strikes your imagination. Does not the sensibility of thy heart present to your view both sides of the medal ! On one figured glory, riches, pleasure to you, to me, to five or six hundred ; on the other side *ruin, desolation, bloodshed, horror* to as many thousands. Almost every ill which angry heaven can shower on mankind attends on *war* ; and yet, my dear friend, from war alone can we expect a situation for the better. (However, "whatever is right," and God cannot will wrongly.) We are here in the utmost hurry fitting for sea. The Bellona goes out of the harbour to-morrow, and the rest will follow very soon. Amongst them all perhaps your friend may meet a chance. If any thing favorable happens to me thou shalt know it. P—— has surely told you that I am not forlorn and alone on board my ship, that I have a fair one to soften my ills, and smooth the disagreeable circumstances attendant on the state of a midshipman. I have indeed (and would to God I never had) for I fear what you and I when last we met and talked on this subject (dreaded) is come to pass. I grow too much attached, not enough to draw me in to any unwarrantable conduct, but
enough

enough to render parting (which must soon be) disagreeable. Some folks exclaim, oh ! what a *blessing* is a *sensible heart* ! Others think sensibility a *cruel curse*. Which class of people to think, I know not. I believe a feeling disposition to be a *blessing* or *misfortune*, according to the worldly situation of the man who has it. For instance, the soul replete with affection for all its fellow-creatures, joins in their sorrows, partakes of their joys, and with them is *miserable* or *blest*. Such a soul, which can by its possession of riches, power, or any worldly advantage, relieve the indigent, raise the oppressed, and wipe away the tears of sorrowing misery, enjoys bliss extatic. But with what melancholy despondence does the good man hang his head when passing by the doors of the wretched he recollects, that he cannot enter because incapable of relieving the cheerless habitation, and that he has nought to give but unavailing tears. And yet more distressing, more woe-bringing is sensibility, when productive of unhappiness from a violation of the heart's dearest feelings ; I mean, when too much tenderness lays you open to a fondness for an object whom your situation compels you to abandon, and leave to her wayward fate ; then it is that the heart feels more nearly, and its sorrows grow more piercing. Yes, my friend, if mankind would once be brought to a just sense of right and wrong, to a love of justice, and a detestation of every base propensity, you would then behold

hold those men whom heaven has blessed with independence, in rapture enjoying the *blessing*, and not making chains for themselves as now they do indeed. I shall soon think with Doctor Swift, that virtue's most glowing votaries are not amongst the great. With them myself am little conversant; but if from appearances, from reports one may form a judgment, I envy them not their feelings; however, let us not rail at this world. I doubt not there are many *great* and *good* men who do honor to humanity, and dignify their nature. We ourselves have met with some few. Consider the circumscribed circle we have moved in. Draw a comparison between the world and the small part we have known as to numbers, and think, if in so small a part many virtuous men have offered themselves to our view, that in the gross they may abound; though I believe it is a general observation, that the good have commonly born a very small proportion to the wicked.

A king's sloop (supposed to be the *Favorite*) from Faulkner's Island, is just come to the *Motherbank*. Her lieutenant is gone express to London, and no boats are suffered to come on board her, nor will any one tell what she is, or whence she came. This appearance of mystery puzzles us, but two days will clear it up. As to *franks*, (if as I said before to you, your delicacy suffers not by the request one single atom) procure me two or three for my mother at Sunbury. (But I intreat, if you feel disagreeable
in

in asking for them you will not, you will more oblige the friend who loves you, by not doing any violence to your own feelings, than you would by doing me the greatest favor.) I sincerely hope your situation will soon be changed. Surely your great friends will not long suffer you to languish in obscurity, and wear out the best of your days in a station fit only for boys, or poor wretches without sensibility or feeling. Argue me not out of *humility*, my friend. It surely is the virtue most befitting humanity, and most acceptable in the eyes of heaven. Oh! Father, teach me to be humble, and ever to feel a consciousness of my own littleness and inconsequence. But to you, my friend, who never breathed a sentiment of arrogance or presumption, why do I preach humility with respect to *Omnipotence*. What a *nothing* is the best, the wisest of us, with respect to others. How many do we find, beyond comparison, our superiors. Thou, in thy partial friendship, wilt suppose me endued with firmness. With fortitude to bear up against the adverse strokes of fortune. Alas! I blush to think thou shouldest be so deceived. Believe me, trifling circumstances affect me, and every little mortification (which perhaps by the *herd* would pass unheeded) fills my soul with bitterness and anguish. To me the stings of dependence are more sharp. The little insults which our unfeeling superiors heap on people of our class, are more keen. You ascribed merit to me from my unconcerns
with

with which I bore my disappointment of the *Coast of Guinea Voyage*. But what merit has the man who cannot feel in bearing pain? So, what praise did I deserve for being unmoved at a misadventure that did not reach my *heart*? Those are not the ills distressing to me. Was my friend a traitor. Had he violated the sacred rights of honor, and his conduct obliged my reluctant heart to throw him from it, then would it bleed. Or was the woman I *loved*, in the haughty pride of superior excellence, to treat me disdainfully, then you would see how weak, how womanly your poor friend would be. But heaven shield us from either misfortune. I shall tire you, my old friend, so adieu.

In this world I am your friend. In the next, if we are to know each other, thou wilt surely be, for it was thy virtues, thy goodness of heart, that first endeared thee to

Your affectionate

R—— B——.

LETTER VI.

A—— guardship, Spithead, 14th Oct. 1770.

Well, my dear fellow, the temple of Janus will now surely be opened, and the *brazen voice of war* be heard through the streets. (There's rodомontade for you.) In short, I think a war will be the consequence of all these mighty preparations; and, in that case, I hope we shall come in for a share of the
sweets

sweets attendant on it. Most sincerely do I congratulate you on your happy prospects; and long have I lamented the blindness of fortune in suffering worth like thine to languish in obscurity. However, in case of a war, I should rather you possessed the gun-room cabin of a good frigate than of the H***, until the time should come that a *great cabin* should become your property.

I presented your respects to the admiral here, with whom I have been much since the ships began to fit out. He is impatient to know if you are in the Sound yet; so when you write, let me know the situation of the Plymouth fleet. The *Achilles*, *Rippon*, *Ajax*, and *Arrogant* are ordered to Cork to embark two regiments and carry them to Gibraltar. The flag here will be shifted to the Saint Antonio, (to which ship I shall belong) unless some fortunate circumstance occurs before the sailing of the above ships. Of such an event I am not entirely hopeless, as many lieutenants are at the rendezvous, and some appointed to those ships that have not yet taken up their commissions, so that something lucky may yet turn out for me. If any thing happens you shall know. Thou was not made to go through this world with any kind of eclat. Why a heart of sensibility is the most disqualifying thing in nature for advancement here. You must learn to become callous to all the fine feelings of humanity, and go thro' the road of life (as our favourite Sterne says) "with
"your

“ your eyes fixed on something before you, neither
 “ turning them to the *right* or the *left*, lest some ob-
 “ jects of distress should strike you with inconve-
 “ nient pity.”

Superiors do you call them. Alas ! how do you pervert the sense of that poor word ; for indeed, my dear friend, there is no real superiority but in virtue ; and the poor *insensible* who can sit unmoved at affecting scenes, ill deserves the name of a superior to *him* whose generous heart shares in the sorrows, and divides the miseries of merit suffering under oppression, or struggling with misfortune. Neither G—— or K—— have made use of your franks, at which I wonder. J—— P—— is well. I have heard of him, though not from him. He is one of our *worthies*. Few souls are there in this world more exaltedly refined. Thank you, my dear fellow, for your kind wishes for L——’s success. Oh ! did you but know his wonderful worth, you would revere and love him as I do. His heart is scarcely to be paralleled ; and he is, I suppose, a man of as great abilities as most. The greatest pleasure I have in prospect is to connect and join together all those glorious few, in whose friendship I can call myself blessed. There, my friend, is the healing balm for all my mortifications, the softener of all my ills, the cure of all my untoward strokes of fortune. The good opinion of those men who dignify their nature, who think exaltedly, and who differ

differ in *thought*, in *word* and *deed*, from the herd, is the great reward I wish in this life. And if I am to them acceptable, surely, in a degree, to the great *Omnipotent*, who has so eminently set them up as objects of *imitation*, and who has given me grace humbly to look up towards them with reverence and awe, I may hope to become acceptable too. By my soul, when I think of the noble group, I am, as it were transported, and my imagination wafts me to a place where uninterrupted by *weakness*, *folly*, or corruption, or their consequences, I may enjoy their fellowship for ever. My greatest, and indeed my only merit is, that I can distinguish virtue and adore it. All our fleet are at Spithead, and have been there these ten days. There are no more large ships commissioned. Let me know if the Defence is sailed for Cork ; and be as particular as you can in the news of your port, because the admiral wishes to know, and often asks me if I have heard from you again. The *promotion* is yet distant, for it seems it will not take place until it shall be determined if *peace* or *war* is to be our fate. Actresses I find are your *favorites*. Ah ! I know your notions, because you are most likely to find sentiment, and the pleasures of refined conversation, with women perpetually conversant in the best authors, and who, to represent nature well, must feel her workings, and I am sure you have taste enough to distinguish, and like the best only.

It

It is amazing to me they do not send a flag to the Mediterranean with those five ships. It is a most important command to be entrusted with a man whose conduct has been said to be suspicious. Far be it from me to reflect on any man's behaviour without knowing it thoroughly, but the voice of the world is rather against him. If I am fortunate enough to go out in this squadron, I shall long to come too in the Sound, that we may have an interview with each other, (though it can be but a short one,) J—— H—— will be with you shortly. He is a worthy young man. Farewell, my dear fellow. Write to me directly, and always think me

Your very sincere friend,

R—— B——.

LETTER VII.

Sheerness, June the 17th, 1771.

Your kind and affectionate letter, my dear old friend, was the severest, strongest reproof to me for my conduct towards you. I blame not myself for leaving London as I did. I could not help it; but I appear highly criminal in my own eyes for not having written to you long ago; however, that friendship which arose in me from my observation of thy many virtues, will remain the same; and no time, no distance shall ever impair the affection I bear you. Of this truth be assured. Sincerely do I feel for you, and lament the concurrence of un-
toward

toward circumstances which thus baffles you in all your hopes ; but indeed your *patron* is unpardonable for his extreme negligence and inattention to your interest. " GOD tempers the wind to the shorn " lambs," says our favorite author. He strengthens the back in proportion to the weight of the burden, and affects not beyond the possibility of human suffering. To you he has graciously granted fortitude and good sense to bear up against that current of evil fortune which would have overwhelmed a weaker mind. You envy my situation. Alas ! my friend, it is only enviable as from it I enjoy rank, and an annual income, which places me above dependence. My captain is a very worthy man, but he lives on shore. I seldom go over the ship's side. We are on exceeding good terms, &c. But what am I when absent from my friends, and none whom I can call by that title have I here. One indeed promises to be soon with me, Lieutenant C——, of whom you have heard me speak. You see, my friend, how much we may be deceived by appearances. You thought my situation very enviable. Consider me in my real light. A creature unknown, unconnected ; in a strange place ; with a heart formed for social intercourse, and deprived of it. Sighing ! wishing for the enjoyment of my absent friends, and the possibility of that happiness denied me. Am I not rather an object of pity than envy ? You have truly decyphered the conduct of the world,

world, in your description of the people's behaviour on board the O****. But do not the great always herd together? Are not their inferiors ever excluded? Do you ever see the poor man of merit in company with the *great*, unless attendant on his *levee* can be termed so! The same gradations are in the naval world; but the great there are, generally speaking, in their conduct, and in their distinctions, so very contemptible and ridiculous, that to be angry at their behaviour would be doing them too much honor. There are undoubtedly some good men, sensible men, and perhaps great men, amongst the corp of captains; but the number of those bear so small a proportion to that of — — — — —

that speaking of them collectively, one may safely say, that — — — — — no body of men in this kingdom can equal them. I never heard of the P***** being put back, until from you. I wrote to C—— by this post. If the ship is sailed, pray find the letter, and send it to him by some safe and good opportunity. Direct to me at — — — — —, and send me some *franks* for yourself, for I do not mean there shall be so great a gap in future, in our correspondence. I have never written to Mr. T—— yet, for which I take shame to myself. I believe there are very few more worthy, better hearts. What does — — — — — say to you? Does he give you no hopes of being able to provide
for

for you? Pray tell me if you have any prospects; or if you are to languish out your life on board a d**n'd guardship? God forbid! Still I look forward to the time when you will strut amongst the *laced coat gentry*, and do them honor. Farewell! and believe me, most affectionately your's,

R—— B——.

LETTER VIII.

Huzzar frigate, Gravesend, Feb. 15, 1771.

How to address you, my dear friend, I know not. To condole with you on the ill fortune which attends you, would carry too thread-bare an air with it. I am sure you know my pen expresses the feelings of my heart, when I tell you I suffered the greatest mortification and disappointment when I found you was not amongst the number *promoted*. Shame on your relations. To call them friends would be basely injuring the name. They deserve it not. Luke-warmth and negligence are in this case crimes of the same consequence as utter refusals to serve you. I saw on my arrival in town the Marquis of ——— and his sons at the play, and looked on them with eyes of benevolence and affection, because I esteemed them (their father at least) the friend of my friend, and the man to whose good offices you would soon owe your promotion, I could with pleasure —— them all, but dare not, for fear of giving you offence. Happy is it for you
that

that you have a mind tempered and prepared for the reception of evil fortune. "GOD" (say the ~~word~~) "fits the back to the burden." In you it is verified, and the arrows of misfortune lose their keenness when launched against a soul like thine, and are impotent to hurt. You are superior to good or ill fortune! and convinced I am, that with the same indifference would walk calmly on in the pleasurable paths of prosperity as in the thorny road of adversity. May the latter never be thine; and never may thy heart shrink from the touch of black misfortune's hand. This stroke has indeed been severe on you, because you had all the right to imagine your promotion was certain; but I think on this very account your friend, if he has one spark of virtue in his soul, will become more strenuous in his endeavours to serve you, and will use every effort to push you on, after you shall have reached the first step of the ladder. I wrote you a scrap the first moment I heard of my own good luck. Since that time I have been rambling, and not long since joined my ship, which is stationed here on the impress service, and to preserve good order amongst the Indiamen. We expect soon however to leave this place, as the ship wants docking. C—— and G—— were here yesterday to see me, and both offer you their service and cordial compliments. Indeed, my friend, well as I love you, I can hardly forgive the trick you served me at P*****, Did you

you get the scurrilous letter I wrote you. We do not meet above once in three years; and surely, when we do breathe the same air, we ought not to be separated. I have no heart to write gayly to you. Every expression of that kind seems to me an insult; and yet I am sure I injure you by such a supposition, and am confident the chagrin you must have felt at first, from your disappointment at being left out of the promotion, has long ere this have left your breast to its old residence, peace and joy. I left my *speaking-trumpet* for you in the A——. Are you yet in the sloop; if you are, I think you will be confirmed. What interest has your patron with the First Lord of the Admiralty? More, I hope, than with the late President. I expect to hear soon a full account of you; and let me know your immediate expectations and destination. Happy shall I be to learn of your welfare and happiness. I look forward with the warmest pleasure, to the time which may arise, when we shall meet and be happy in each other's converse. Do not, my dear fellow, come within fifty miles of me without letting me know, and I will fly on the wings of friendship to meet you. I long much to make you acquainted with some souls congenial with your own, capable of the fire of friendship, and worthy yourself. Since I saw you I have had a long letter from my dear L——, whose arrival in England I daily expect. I wish to add to your happiness by giving you a knowledge

knowledge of one of the most perfect and amiable souls of God's creation. I wrote lately to C——, and hear our old friend P—— is an ensign in the India company's service. God speed them both, and grant them only success equal to their *merit*; but that He will not do, because He ever gives trials to exercise the virtues of the good and great. Farewell, my dear C——. Believe me for ever,

Your very sincere and affectionate friend,

R—— B——.

LETTER IX.

L——x, North Shields, 1771.

With conscious shame, my dear loved friend, I acknowledge the receipt of your first and last letter to me here, and feel a degree of painful gratitude arising in my breast for your obliging condescension in enquiring after a man who by his negligence did not deserve your remembrance. To a heart friendly, kind, and benevolent as thine is, any excuse, provided it is sincere, will suffice to excite sentiments of forgiveness, and some excuses I have. Soon after the receipt of your first letter we were ordered to Sheerness to dock, and were scarcely arrived at this place when your last kind epistle reached me. The last eight months of my life has been fraught with *sorrow* and *disappointment*, and my heart has felt misery unknown before, and which I trust will never happen again. You know poor S——'s fate;*

* Drowned from the boat upsetting in going ashore from his ship.

(my late captain,) But to form an idea of what I suffered you should have known him personally. He was, my friend, one amongst the most amiable of the human kind. Every great, every engaging quality centered in him. His heart was the dwelling of virtue and benevolence. Grace and dignity accompanied his every action. Delicacy and refined sentiment were eminently his; and extreme humility threw the brightest lustre over the whole. Such was the man I knew and loved; and whom one unfortunate hour snatched from the enjoyment of the most perfect human felicity. His wife was his very counter-part, and possessed his virtues, softened by female sweetness; lovely to a degree in person, in mind, and manners. I saw, my friend, this woman plunged from happiness into misery: into such misery as only souls like thine can form any idea of. Thou hast long known my heart, and mayest judge of its feelings on this occasion. But, my dear fellow, as if my cup of misery was not sufficiently full, and my heart groaned not under woe sufficient, it was the will of *heaven* that I should learn the dreadful fate of the noblest worthies, best amongst the sons of men, my friend L——— perished miserably, swallowed by the merciless ocean. He left ——, an island bordering on Newfoundland, a year ago, and has never since been heard of. I do not apologize to you for telling you my distresses, it is the privilege of friendship; and I feel offended that you should

should think apologies necessary for pouring into
 my bosom your untoward fortune. Most sincerely
 do I sympathize with you, and truly should I share
 in a happy reverse of fortune. I cannot approve of
 your *foreign scheme*; it will be attended with certain
 and immediate ill *consequences*; and the advantages
 you expect, are distant and uncertain. To counter-
 balance the independence which you might derive
 from a commission in the Portuguese service, look
 towards the mortification of being amongst a people
 whose language you understand not, and the un-
 pleasing feelings of the ingenuous mind at receiving
 wages for services not performed; for the ignorance
 of the language will effectually prevent your being
 of real service officially, for a long time. Then, on
 the pecuniary score, reckon the expence of the pas-
 sage to Lisbon and back again; (for you do not
 mean to stay there longer than the peace shall con-
 tinue.) The amount of fitting out, to appear on a
 respectable footing; and lastly, will your friends
 approve this scheme? If they do not, and you pro-
 secute it, it will be a sufficient cause to them to
 withdraw their patronage and friendship from a man,
 who is, if they have any feeling, perpetual cause of
 shame and reproach to them. C—— on their luke-
 warm hearts, which suffers worth like thine to re-
 main neglected and buried in obscurity. Forgive
 my warmth. Thou mayest fancy thyself obliged to
 them, I should not think so, if by their means you
 were

were made a post-captain to-morrow, (which you ought to be.) It is better for you to go to N——. You there may excite a yearly blush from their unfeeling hearts. A promotion there will be before the station is out; and it seems to me next to impossible, but that the least exertion of interest will raise you to that rank which you ought to have honored long since. It would be unpardonable, insolence, and presumption in me to expect the promotion you wish me. Admiral G—— neither can, nor if he could, would effect such a change. C—— is well. I have been favored with one of his elegant letters. He is an honor to human nature. When fortune shall bless me with an opportunity of meeting thee, thou shalt know all his worth. H—— is not yet made a lieutenant. J—— C—— I have treated ill by never answering his letter of a year's date. My cursed indolence will justly lose me his good opinion. My heart is as yet free, and likely to continue so. If ever I am about to marry thou shalt know it. Do not despair, my dear C——. Keep up your spirits. Fortune may have many good things in store for you, and brighter suns may illumine your coming days. The *sunshine* of *prosperity* may break out on thee, and thy mind will draw good from evil, in the reflection that the knowledge of adversity will give keener joys to prosperity, and soften your heart (good as it is) towards the unfortunate partners of our *race*. Heaven
bless

blefs thy foul of worth, and give thee in this life
good proportioned to thy merit, and you will in
that cafe make a sharer of your happinefs,

Your fincerely affectionate,

R—— B——.

LETTER X.

Antigua, Auguft the 12th, 1774.

May this hail my ever loved friend on his arrival
to his native land, and find him as happy as I wifh
him. Your letter which you mentioned from Glas-
gow, fome two years fince, received. Believe me,
moft punctually answered, and fo speedily, that I
did not defpair of its finding you at Glasgow, and
addreffed it thither, which may probably have been
the occafion of its mifcarriage. I know too well
the value and efteem of one like you, to neglect
the means by which it muft be continued to me;
and, if I ever deferved really to become an alien
to your friendship, I muft be fallen indeed. No,
my dear friend, my heart ftill fo tenderly clinches
the memory of that warm, that fincere friendship
which firft united us, that I look forward to a *period*
when it fhall be given us, to retire for a time from
the vain bufle of an empty world, to tafte the joys
of friendship in their higheft perfection. In fhort
I mean, that it forms a part of my plan of happinefs
to enjoy with you the tranquil pleasures of the
country, in fome fequeftered fpot, imperious to the
interruption

interruption of noise, impertinence, and folly. We will have some addition to our party, of men whose bosoms yet glow with the generous flame of virtue, and teem with benevolence and kindness towards the whole race of men. Before our scheme will be ripe for execution, you will have devoted enough of your time to public life, and the duties of your profession, (for perfection in a degree once obtained.) I see not the inducement to serve in time of peace, or the obstacles to retirement with dignity and self-applause. Your intentions respecting Falkland Island, pardon my condemning totally. I once passed a year in a similar situation; and though I enjoyed the converse of my first-loved friend; tho' pleasure and instruction fell in endless streams from his lips, and I was animated by his lessons and example to tread the arduous path of virtue, I yet found some tedious, some irksome hours. What then will be your situation. Cheerless and alone, in gloomy solitude; unenlightened by the sun of friendship, which can make a desert smile, and beam happiness on its votaries, in all places, and in all climates. Banish, my worthy friend, banish the idea. I had indeed determined to follow L—— into the solitary wilds and dreary wastes of Labradore; but I loved L——. who joined to the most consummate virtue, and every solid accomplishment, the happy talent of *wit*, and could boast the charms of genuine humour. I will dissuade you on the principle of propriety.

propriety, which wittingly thou wilt not violate, the command of a schooner at Falkland Islands will not conduce to your improvement in naval knowledge. No, my friend, be employed as long as rectitude demands, and when we meet, and our plan is matured, we will take shelter against the storms of public life, in the arms of retirement, with one or two friends, from whom we may learn to advance in the pursuit of those objects which alone are worthy the attention of man, *wisdom* and *virtue*. I was chagrined to miss you here. My heart danced with rapture when I learnt your *promotion*; and that joy was heightened when I heard you was in the R*****. Fortune has played us a very scurvy trick, but we will live to be revenged on her. Our correspondence has been cruelly interrupted. Let us contrive to soften the sad necessity that parts us, by more frequently writing. Believe me, I love too sincerely that peculiar blessing (if I may call it so) of virtue, which distinguished thee, to forget you for a moment. Your mildness, generosity, and unaffected goodness, first endeared you to me; and I should conceive any falling off in my affection for you as a prognostic that I was losing my love of virtue and relish for the charms of goodness. I shall write to H——. I wish S—— may be confirmed a captain, but I doubt it. Remember me to every one who knows me, and do not fail to give me early accounts of yourself. If you see C——

in your travels, cherish him, as one of the noblest of God's creatures, and the dearest of my friends, to whom I owe infinite obligations. I retain affection for C——'s thousand good qualities. I wrote to him some time since, but know not his address. I long to hear from you, but for heaven's sake take not precipitately a step that will work you sorrow and repentance. Abandon your scheme of *Falkland Islands*. Tell me how you are to be disposed of. I shall now forgive your great friends their former shameful indolence provided they complete their work by another *step* in two years. Farewell, my dear friend,

And believe me for ever your's,

R—— B——.

LETTER XI.

A——, Chatham, 1777.

Your letter was the greeting of a long lost friend, and a hearty welcome I gave it. I shall never forget, my dear fellow, those qualities that first attached me to you, your probity, benevolence, and generosity; nor could a separation, however long, have worn out from my heart the affection they planted there. I forgot how our account stood in the correspondence way; and it was my indolence, and love of procrastination, which has permitted you to prevent me in writing, having intended it the moment I heard of the R——'s arrival in England.

England. I dare not be angry, but I may tenderly complain that you have not brought me a letter from C——. To write to me is simple justice, because I deserve it for the warm affection I bare him. I never knew a soul more exalted than that excellent young man. I lament the cruel situation wherein he is placed; though he will pass his winter more pleasantly than I at first apprehended, supposing the sloop employed on the coast of America. I learnt that he was on good terms with his captain, who had conceived for him a fatherly affection. I shall send you a letter for him, but chance may throw us together in the course of the winter. I am third lieutenant of the C——, pleasantly situated. The captain is one of the most amiable characters, and the gentlest manners; and the members of our wardroom mess very well assorted. Our destination is as yet unknown; but if this armament shall continue, I presume we shall join the general rendezvous at Spithead, and I may then hope the pleasure of seeing you again. I saw your brother at Blandford. If you had served in the L——, you would probably have found that promotion which has happily fallen to the lot of our old acquaintance F——. I passed my time pleasantly (as you may suppose) in *France*; and which is of more consequence, improveably. I led the life of a school-boy, dividing the day between my studies and my exercises. I think you have a fair chance for promotion; may
you

you soon attain it, it is my very sincere wish, because I know you well deserve it. By a little management a vacancy may be secured for you during the next year's voyage. I hope you will have no reason to exercise that philosophy and resignation with which you seem prepared to meet the untoward circumstances of this various and uncertain state. I confess you had formerly but too many occasions for the exertion of your fortitude. For no man, with your pretensions from connexions, was ever suffered to languish longer on the mortifying obscurity of a *midshipman's* life. If all men followed your rule of estimating the value of their own lot by that of surrounding numbers, whose lot is more hardly cast, how few would have cause of complaint. *Humility* is the virtue we all most want. Forming idle and unwarrantable estimates of our own importance and talents, is the source of half the gloomy countenances and aching bosoms of the sons of men. Read, my friend, the good Sir *Eardley Wilmot's* advice to his son. "Always remember, my dear son, that to be *humble* is to be *great*; to be *contented* is to be *wise*; and to subdue the *passions* is to be *good*. The only sure happiness to be found this side the grave is a *consciousness* of your own *rectitude*. All peace and heart-felt joy is the gift of virtue; and there is no applause in this world worth having, unless crowned with your *own*." (Pardon this digression.) You ask me my prospects, my

my dear friend? I have often and impartially weighed my *merits* and *pretensions*. I have searched into my own heart. I have balanced my talents and abilities against my *rewards* and *enjoyments*, and with unaffected consciousness do I declare, that my present situation is so vastly more than a compensation for my *deserts*, and so much beyond my reasonable *expectations*, that I am most heartily grateful to *Providence* for all his *mercies*, and only look forward to a rank in life more exalted, as something I would strive to deserve, without the faintest hopes of attaining it.

It is not in Admiral G——'s power to get me forward; and there are two men who have claims on his good graces, which I have not; to whom he can only wish further good, on Sterne's principle, "of man's nature being prone to cherish what he raised, and to water the plant he put into the ground." You have heard from C——. He neglects me totally. God bless you, and think me the sincere friend of your many virtues,

R—— B——.

LETTER XII.

A——, Spithead.

Your letter, my dear friend, addressed to me at Chatham, was only put into my hands this day; whence you will perceive, that if any little resentment should have risen in your mind from my silence,

lence, I have not deserved it. I answer that letter, though I promise myself the pleasure of seeing you soon, because I love to converse with you, and to an imagination, ^{only} ~~un~~commonly warm, writing is but conversation; and I thus anticipate the satisfaction by some days, perhaps. Have you heard from H—— C———? He is indeed the worthy character you represent him; and I only lament he lost the occasion of acquiring those graces and accomplishments which make great characters pleasing as well as awful, and neglected to give that polish to the diamond which it must now ever want, by misapplying his time, and devoting it to the society and conversation of some men, who winning on his easy nature, led him into excesses that disgraced him, at the same time that they disabled him from giving attention to his improvement. I confess to you, my friend, I begin to feel my love for *peace* and *solitude* growing daily on me; but as their attainment is placed far beyond my reach, I cherish, with contented gratitude, the lot that is assigned me, and am most thankful to *Providence* that I am placed beyond want, and the necessity of personal labor, confessing most solemnly, and without affectation, that I know of no claims to an exemption from the common destiny of the bulk of mankind.

I think your chance a good one, may you succeed; I wish it because I love you, and for a better reason, because I firmly believe that justice and humanity

manity

manity would be the basis of your conduct, and that you would exert for the good of those entrusted to your care the powers vested in you. The captain of the A—— is what I trust you will one day be, when you have attained his rank, a pattern of benevolence and goodness; *bumble, mild, and unaffected*; of fine sensibility, and a delicacy too rarely to be found, and incomprehensible to half mankind. Although I know him but two months, I would pawn my life I am not deceived in him. A consciousness of doing right ought to be rewarded, say you. That *consciousness* is its own reward; every other would debase it. Did I not know you, I should conclude you have never felt the sweet influences of virtuous transport after the indulgence of an emotion of benevolence. Is the reward of virtue *bread*? No, my friend, its recompence is beyond the power of man to bestow; and if the period of our being here was the final term of our existence, and no state of retribution succeeded to this supposed state of trial, yet the virtuous man in the rapture of his own feelings has received ample recompence for all the self-denials and sacrifices which the steady pursuit of virtue may have occasioned him. It is your duty to conquer the growing propensity to *retirement*, because your connexions will call you forth to active life, and the service of the public. I pity my dear C——'s situation. He is one of the most gallant characters on earth. No. You may be assured I
 never

never had the presumption to think I had *talents* to produce any thing for the public eye, nor did I ever write a single line for the *press* in my life, or ever thought of it. I have never seen the composition you talk of. They do me too much honor who ascribe it to me; and if it should fall in your way pray disabuse them. I had no intention of coming ashore had we remained here till Midsummer. My affection for you will draw me there, but not yet. And if you can contrive, without impropriety, to come here, I shall be flattered and pleased. From my great reluctance to leave the ship, if you should see any body who knows me, pray offer them my compliments. Is Mr. F——, of the C—— here? I esteem him infinitely, from the knowledge I have of his worth. He told me he was going to command a tender. He was so good as to speak of me to Captain H——, in such a manner as to induce him to appoint me third lieutenant of the ship he commands. Can you doubt how rejoiced I shall be to see you! Seven years are almost passed since last we met. Could not your captain be prevailed on to defer his purpose of quitting his ship until his arrival in America. Let me hear from you. The boat that brings this will wait for Captain R——, and may bring me a line from you.

Adieu! till we meet.

R—— B——,

LETTER XIII.

A——, Spithead, Feb. 3, 1777.

I do not condole with you on your disappointment, as it can hardly be deemed one, considering the feint hopes you yourself entertained of succeeding in your command of the C——. I think it exceedingly probable you may find the means of consolation during your stay abroad, for a vacancy may doubtless be made for you, more especially if the sloop should be condemned to pass a second winter in America. Your observation of some (whom in your *humility* you call superiors,) hopeless of promotion, and condemned to languish on the obscure honors of the legions, should not at all influence you to hope less, or weaken your confidence; because you are not to learn, that *talents, knowledge, virtue*, are by no means solid foundations whereon to build reasonable hopes of worldly advancement; on the contrary, the possession of those qualities is in itself most frequently an obstacle to the attainment of promotion in any *line*. The virtuous man is too proud to pursue those means which alone can produce the effect of raising him in the world. You have connexions, my friend, which will advance you without either trouble or sacrifice on your part. If you had indeed only the recommendation of good sense, a worthy heart, a pure and compassionate spirit, you might with great justice apprehend that your lot might be drawn no higher

higher than that of those men whom you believe to possess merit ; but each man's hopes should be proportioned to the means of their gratification, which birth, fortune, or accident may have given him. And if you beheld men of influence and consideration either by themselves or others unable to get forward, you then might have reasonable cause to despair. Indeed chance has so ordered it, that in all civil societies, those men in each line of office procure advancement who are quite as well qualified to fill them, as if merit alone was the only qualification attended too ; for by what standard are you to judge of a man's merit. The libidinous man in power would behold in the most complaisant pimp a paragon of human excellence. He who could in the most delicate way offer up the grateful incense of flattery to the great man, in whom vanity was the ruling passion, would in his eye possess superior merit. The ambitious minister would amply reward every forward fool who had the means of advancing his purposes, and administering to his designs of preserving or increasing his power ; so that unless men were all virtuous, things perhaps would be vastly worse than they would be if merit was to become the pretended plea for every candidate's promotion.

London was always noisy, and always disagreeable in my eyes. There is, my friend, vice and misery enough every where, but more in large cities than elsewhere, because men are there thrown together

gether in greater numbers, and corruption is always in proportion to the numbers of men living together. The A—— is going a month's cruise in the Bay, so that I may hope to see you here at my return. Your sentiments on the subject of *war* are those of a good man; it is too dear a price for promotion. The contemplation of the horrors and calamities which desolate the world when the flame of war is lighted up. It is certain that good men will, generally speaking, be contented, because all things fairly summed up, the balance of the account is always on the side of gratitude and thankfulness; so little, so very little is necessary to gratify our physical wants. Health, and a little food; a roof to shelter us; a fire, and decently warm clothes to preserve us from the *cold*, form the principle sum of that which is essentially necessary to human nature. What you call preaching, my dear friend, is but pouring out to me the sentiments of a virtuous heart, which loves mankind, and feels for its miseries. Pray preach on, you give me pleasure by it, and let your sermons henceforth be longer. Heaven does probably (as you say,) delight in a cheerful countenance; but neither perhaps is it undelighted when it beholds the countenance suffused with a glow of virtuous indignation at the contemplations of the sufferings of a part of the human race, occasioned by the *vices, cruelties, and wickedness* of the other part. No, you do

do not preach, because you have the spleen. Your sensibility suffers, and you give it vent in the confidence of friendship. You and I, my friend, (if we are wise,) never can meet with evils to make us gloomy, because we ought to be beyond the reach of fortune's malice. No real evil can betide us but that which flows from wounded sensibility, and those strokes which affect the even temperament of the heart's affections. May the beneficence of heaven shield us from those. Farewell, my friend for a month. At the expiration of that time we shall be able at least to hear from each other.

R—— B——.

LETTER XIV.

A——, Wednesday eve, Plymouth Sound, 1777.

It is you, my dear friend, to whom excuses are due. I ought to have written to you on our arrival here, but my shameful indolence was conquered in the conflict between it and the impulses of my conscience. I rejoice at your opening prospects. May they soon be terminated in the attainment of all you wish. I apprehend (from what you say,) that the same mode of promotion may be adopted for you as was the last year for —— ———. We shall not meet again this year ; for though all our ballast was taken out before we were taken into dock to replace the false keel carried away by our accident, we shall be ready to sail again on Friday next. We
have

have been at little more expence here than we should have known at sea. The trouble we complain not of, though we attend the equipment of the ship with unceasing assiduity, because we wish to please Captain R——, who is interested in our early readiness, and who grows more and more the object of our affection and esteem. He is indeed, in the most extended sense of the word. a *good man*. He has in common (with perhaps a few more of his corps,) *humanity* and *benevolence*; and those qualities (which I have seldom seen or heard of in a captain of a man of war,) *humility*, *modesty*, and *delicacy*. If you should think me worthy at some future period to sail with you, I shall be sure of another occasion of celebrating the virtues of a captain of an English man of war. I thank you for your wish, that I may never know a greater disappointment than this occasioned by the prevention of our cruize. A man without hope can never feel the pangs of disappointment; and I have the best security against that *evil*, an utter impossibility of ever being subject to it. I can only be disappointed in finding my affections ill-bestowed, and my friendship fixed on objects that deserve not esteem; there too I think I am secure. I enclose you a letter for that worthy good soul C——. I am delighted at your growing friendship. Hearts like yours were formed to love each other. I admire your delicacy on the subject of American *prize money*. I avoid thinking too deeply on the subject,

and

and dread to investigate it too narrowly. I am a little hurt that C—— has not written to me. He ought to know there lives not a man to whom he is dearer than to me; for he has bound me to him by ties stronger than those of affection, (the ties of gratitude) for he saved me the pain of bearing about the galling reflection that the sacred dust of my dearest friend was insulted by the base obloquy of an unworthy miscreant. He is a glorious character. The unexpected necessity of wintering abroad must have been a cruel stroke to him, though it may produce a good end. All our Plymouth ships are returned disabled. The T—— almost sinking, from a general leak. The S——, R——, and N—— are ordered to fit for foreign service. Their destination probably America. We shall certainly sail to-morrow, if the wind permits. If you should find occasion to write to me, direct to Mr. S——, Crutched Friars; and leave letters at Portsmouth, telling me your situation. The conclusion of your letter flatters me too sensibly thou art worthy the love and esteem of all good men, for your benevolence and goodness, uncorrupted by the contagion of vice and folly, which swarm around you. Your little C—— went into the Sound to-day, and sails to-morrow for the West Indies. May you command the sloop that shall succeed her on your station. All prosperity be your's, my worthy honest friend,
 And I am most affectionately ever your's,

R—— B——.

I shall herewith subjoin for your guidance and direction in so important and arduous a charge as that of the command of a man of war, the instructions and good advice of an old *captain in the navy* to his son, on his first appointment to a command, which I think contains some useful and salutary hints. My long and sincere friendship for you will make all apologies unnecessary.

ON THE DUTIES OF A CAPTAIN IN THE ROYAL NAVY.

“ In compliance with your request, my son, I
 “ here freely give you my thoughts in writing to
 “ peruse at your leisure, as they have occasionally
 “ occurred to my memory, on the duties of a cap-
 “ tain, the disposition and discipline of a *ship* and
 “ *fleet* ; and, to the uttermost of my power, (which
 “ I hope may serve you as useful hints hereafter,)
 “ when you may arrive at *command*, to improve, and
 “ further enlarge on, as time and experience may
 “ furnish you with frequent opportunities. Till then,
 “ take the *following rules and general remarks* for your
 “ present instruction and information.”

“ First then, to begin with a captain’s duty ; which,
 “ that I may expatiate on with more freedom, and
 “ give less offence in my sentiments and opinions of
 “ so honorable a trust, my parental affection for
 “ you, my son, leads me for the present to suppose
 “ you the person just entering on the command of
 “ one

“one of his majesty’s ships, entrusted to your care
 “and conduct. Let me then recommend on your
 “first appearance on board to your officers and
 “men, (as from your conduct at the beginning)
 “they will take more or less favorable *impressions* of
 “your future conduct and behaviour. Not to put
 “on that *disgustful air* of *haughtiness* and *pride*, so na-
 “tural to little minds, intoxicated with the diffe-
 “rence paid to *all around them*. When on the con-
 “trary, the becoming dignity of an officer (who
 “never loses sight of the *gentleman*, will gain you
 “the *respect* and *esteem* both of your officers and
 “men, who will, from such deportment, always
 “obey your orders with pleasure and alacrity. A
 “pleasing consideration this, to establish a character
 “on so happy and exemplary a basis. As the cap-
 “tain will naturally enquire into the *state* and *con-*
 “*dition* of the ship, and of each officer in his re-
 “spective station, he should be always cautious to
 “express himself with propriety, that his officers
 “may see that he understands every thing relative
 “to their several duties as well as his own, and
 “judge from their answers, wherein they excel,
 “and wherein they are deficient, as he may have
 “occasion to employ them on the service, either at
 “at home or abroad. Before he gives his orders,
 “be ought to *weigh* and *consider* them in every light,
 “especially if judged necessary, that neither the *ser-*
 “*vice* nor his own *credit* may suffer by the remarks
 “the

“ the officers may make on either ; But when once
 “ delivered, let him see them put immediately in
 “ execution, with proper spirit and diligence, to
 “ convince his *officers* and *men*, that his majesty’s ser-
 “ vice is not on any consideration whatever, to be
 “ neglected or postponed.”

“ His commands should always be attended with
 “ good example, steadiness, and regular discipline
 “ throughout ; free from *passion*, which *too often*
 “ breaks out into *oaths*, *meannefs of language*, and in-
 “ *decent behaviour*, so justly reproachful, and highly
 “ unbecoming his character. Besides, he should
 “ consider how much ill-habit infect the officers,
 “ and make a rapid progress through all ranks and
 “ degrees downwards, even to the poor thoughtless
 “ sailor, who eagerly catches at every rising folly he
 “ sees or hears, and thinks it his greatest merit to
 “ ape the vices and foibles of his superiors. I hope
 “ for the credit of the service, now so happily im-
 “ proved in many respects, that it no longer deserves
 “ the reproaches it formerly may have incurred.
 “ As such *indecentcy of language* and behaviour would
 “ at present sound harsh and unbecoming in the
 “ mouth of the boatswain, how contemptible would
 “ it appear then, in an officer of rank, were he to
 “ degrade himself so low in his behaviour to officers
 “ when they wait on him on duty, who have an un-
 “ doubted right to be treated as gentlemen.”

“ Whenever he comes on deck (not from any
 “ sudden

“ sudden call of duty,) let him shew himself on so
 “ public a *parade* always in a decent *military dress*, and
 “ with an agreeable deportment becoming his cha-
 “ racter as *governor* of a floating garrison committed
 “ to his charge. Let his ears be open to all who
 “ have any grievances to lay before him, which re-
 “ quires his authority to redress, or his humanity to
 “ soften and alleviate. When the nature of the ser-
 “ vice, the duty he is on, or other incidents put it
 “ out of his power to remove, and where reprimands
 “ are only necessary, if tempered at the same time
 “ with gentleness, they seldom fail of having the
 “ desired effect. When he occasionally invites his
 “ officers, or gentlemen of the quarter-deck to his
 “ table, he should consider himself in no other light
 “ than as one of the company. They are his *guests*,
 “ and that speaks all. Thus, a freedom of conver-
 “ sation supported and kept up by mutual compli-
 “ ance and politeness, which should be always pro-
 “ moted and encouraged by the commander, with
 “ the obliging and good manners of equality; and
 “ it will besides have this happy effect, that by taking
 “ off all restraint but what a just decorum and be-
 “ coming deference may warrant amongst gentle-
 “ men, the *captain* will be able to form a judgement
 “ from their several opinions of men, and things in
 “ general, and of their respective *capacities, parts,*
 “ and *addresses*, and employ them accordingly, where
 “ the nature of the service might sometimes require
 “ the

“the exertion of such different abilities; for though
 “each may be the *brave officer* and *seaman*, yet each
 “may not have talents alike to serve his country
 “with that address and advantage which a com-
 “mander has found absolutely necessary and re-
 “quisite in the course of a voyage, station, or in
 “foreign parts. I cannot here resist the pleasure,
 “my son, of giving you two shining examples, tho’
 “of higher rank, but still so *apposite* to the purpose,
 “in the persons of two great admirals, who were
 “possessed of those rare and eminent qualities of
 “serving their country in the double capacity of
 “commanding officers and ambassadors, both which
 “duties they discharged with equal *ability, honor,*
 “and *address*. The one was Lord Torrington, in
 “the Mediterranean, in the year 1718, where he so
 “remarkably distinguished himself at the head of an
 “embassy, as well as at the head of a fleet, in which
 “you may remember I had the honor to command
 “a *line of battle ship*. The other great officer was
 “Sir George Rook, who gave a singular proof of
 “his good conduct and address at a very critical
 “conjuncture, when he commanded the *English* and
 “*Dutch* fleets in the Baltic, where he was sent to
 “mediate a peace both as admiral and plenipo-
 “tentiary, as well as to protect the *young King of*
 “*Sweden*, in the year 1700, against a powerful and
 “ingenuous confederacy entered into by *Russia,*
 “*Denmark, and Poland*. For the Swedish admiral,
 “through

“ through an ill-timed ambition, expecting to have
 “ the chief command, joined the English and Dutch
 “ fleets with his squadron, and continued at anchor
 “ almost twelve days without taking notice of either,
 “ though he knew both came to save his master
 “ from ruin. But such flights and obstinacy Sir
 “ George Rook by his great prudence and fore-
 “ thought happily adjusted in the following man-
 “ ner: He ordered a Dutch frigate to make the
 “ signal for all flag officers, to which, when they all
 “ repaired, he represented in such strong terms the
 “ necessity, as well as propriety of his commanding
 “ the whole combined fleet, that all, without hesi-
 “ tation, put themselves under his command. Such
 “ anecdotes of the lives of great men are surely as
 “ worthy of remark and imitation as examples of
 “ the most glaring *actions*, which are not so frequent,
 “ or possibly can be. But to return—Let him (the
 “ captain,) always, on every occasion, preserve a
 “ steadiness and presence of mind, particularly in
 “ *action* with the *enemy*, where he will find it abso-
 “ lutely necessary, for the good and safety of the
 “ whole; for he may depend on it, his *words* and
 “ *actions*, nay, his very *countenance*, so oft’ the index
 “ of the mind, will then be narrowly watched and
 “ examined, and inferences drawn in his favor, or
 “ against him, according as he sets the example of a
 “ spirited conduct, or betrays a contrary disposition
 “ on so interesting and important an occasion. Let
 “ me

" me earnestly recommend him not to shew too
 " great an inclination to *punish*, because he has pow-
 " er. On the contrary, I would have his humanity
 " display itself even in his chastisements. Punish-
 " ment is of too serious a nature to be inflicted
 " wantonly, or made too free with on every slight
 " offence. But when correction is thought neces-
 " sary and expedient for the general good, let it be
 " given in a regular, exemplary manner, without
 " *passion* or *prejudice*, and strictly enforced according
 " to the rules of war. Yet forgiveness has some-
 " times had a happier effect. A gentle reproof often
 " reclaims. Besides, to punish with the utmost ri-
 " gour is *brutality*, not justice. He ought, by every
 " effort in his power, to check his natural temper,
 " (if unhappily so inclined,) of ^{*finishing*} ~~convincing~~ his officers
 " perhaps merely to shew his authority; often on too
 " trivial a pretence to warrant so unjustifiable a pro-
 " cedure, more especially in warm unhealthy cli-
 " mates, unless some pressing and immediate exi-
 " gency requires it, that might make such severity
 " indispensably necessary. It is a weighty confide-
 " ration not only to deprive an officer of his liberty,
 " but to endanger his life at the same time by too
 " close a confinement, when the ship itself is but a
 " *more enlarged prison*; therefore, suspension from
 " duty is now thought sufficient, except (as I ob-
 " served before,) on some urgent occasion, till an
 " opportunity offers of bringing an officer to a
 " court-

“ court-martial. Upon the whole, if the captain
 “ and officers would but seriously reflect how each
 “ must alternately expose the other by recrimina-
 “ tions, reproaches, &c. &c. in the course of a pub-
 “ lic trial, they would undoubtedly never suffer their
 “ passion to carry them to such unhappy lengths;
 “ but on the contrary, let their calm thoughts take
 “ place, which with the interposition of both; for I
 “ would always advise them never to forget this in-
 “ variable maxim as a lesson for their conduct both
 “ in *public* and in *private* life, that the gentleman
 “ and the officer never should be separated. As the
 “ captain may properly be called the father of the
 “ ship’s company, (a most comprehensive and en-
 “ dearing appellation,) it is his indispensable duty
 “ to see himself that the poor seaman be not wrong’d
 “ of his due, or the service carried on by *noise, stripes,*
 “ or *blows*; a method so inhuman, so unlike the of-
 “ ficer, and so contrary to all true discipline, as (de-
 “ fertion) of which I have some instances, must be the
 “ unavoidable consequence. Whereas men should be
 “ indulged in all active exercises and recreations,
 “ such as may contribute best to render their bodies
 “ vigorous and hardy, and their limbs pliant and
 “ useful on many occasions, and not the ship made
 “ a *prison* of, but when the service requires constant
 “ and immediate attendance, or liberty is abused.
 “ Let me advise you, my son, on no consideration
 “ whatever, to suffer the odious breath of a tale-
 “ bearer,

“bearer, or the insinuating flattery of a sycophant,
 “who watches every unguarded foible, to taint your
 “ears with reports to the prejudice of an officer
 “under your command. If you forget yourself
 “thus by stooping so much below your character,
 “contempt, murmurings, and fatal distrusts are the
 “too certain consequences not to foresee. In short,
 “(as I hinted to you before,) the gentleman will
 “always tell the officer where to reward, and where
 “to rebuke. As I cannot omit, my son, any ma-
 “terial circumstance which may regard your future
 “happiness and reputation as a commander, let me
 “beg of you to avoid in joining with some of the
 “corps in the ungenerous method too often prac-
 “tised when they meet together, of bringing the
 “characters of their respective officers on the car-
 “pet, to fill up a blank in conversation, where
 “they sometimes inhumanly stab their good name,
 “according to their several opinions, prejudices, or
 “pre-sentiments. The officers who can thus wan-
 “tonly sport with the characters of others, (a strong
 “proof of a little mind and narrow education,) de-
 “serves the highest *reproof*, *indignity*, and *contempt*;
 “and I should not hesitate to pronounce him un-
 “worthy the command he dishonors so greatly. I
 “hope whenever you command, you will never put
 “your officers and men upon such duty or hardships
 “as may be attended with too much probability of
 “success, or hazard their lives where the safety and
 “good

“good of all are not depending; therefore weigh
 “and consider your *orders* well before you deliver
 “them, and not lay yourself open to the censure of
 “some, and the just indignation of others, who
 “may perhaps have suffered by your rash, ig-
 “norant, and imprudent conduct. In the distri-
 “bution of such posts or stations as may at any time
 “fall under your command, let me recommend to
 “you always to give the preference to the most de-
 “serving, and never suffer yourself to be biassed by
 “partiality or interest, where merit may lay in a
 “juster claim. It is your duty in particular to ex-
 “cite a laudable emulation amongst your officers
 “of every description, by setting a full value on
 “their services, and giving them their due praise;
 “and moreover, where they distinguish themselves
 “in their several stations, omit no opportunity of
 “recommending such to preferment; then will you
 “justly attach the love and esteem of all, and esta-
 “blish a permanent character, which will give you
 “always that weight and consequence in the service
 “which every commander would undoubtedly be
 “ambitious of obtaining. In points ceremonial,
 “such as *guards, salutes, &c. &c.* there are so many
 “degrees and incidents, which require a judicious
 “discernment how to act, in order to avoid giving
 “too much or too little respect, that we can only
 “be guided in general by what has been observed
 “before on similar occasions, if there is any such
 “pre-

“ precedents ; and where there are not, we must
 “ only consider upon the whole, the former will be
 “ better taken, and give less offence than the latter.
 “ There are some of the most material points of a
 “ captain’s duty that occur to me at present ; re-
 “ commending to him above all considerations, to
 “ have a strict regard to his *instructions*, and what
 “ *orders* he may from time to time receive from his
 “ superiors, never forgetting the trust reposed in
 “ him, which should take place of every selfish,
 “ every sordid view, the command of a British man
 “ of war being a post of such importance, that the
 “ honor of his king, and the good of his country
 “ are points he may often have the glory to support
 “ and maintain. I hope now, my son, you will
 “ conclude with me, that what I have here advan-
 “ ced upon the whole, in the duties of a captain,
 “ with regard to his prince, his country, and him-
 “ self, will appear reasonable and impartial, and
 “ therefore not unworthy your serious consideration,
 “ whenever it shall be your good fortune to arrive
 “ at a command ; in which, I earnestly wish you to
 “ amend in your own conduct whatever errors you
 “ may have remarked in others, in your future ob-
 “ servations, or whatever you may have remarked
 “ in your father in particular. I think it highly
 “ necessary for your advantage and instruction, be-
 “ fore I quit this subject, to say something on what
 “ I have seen and observed in general engagements
 “ of

“of fleets and squadrons; a subject of too great im-
 “portance to be overlooked, and worthy of an abler
 “pen. If you look forward (as I trust you do,) to
 “higher preferment in the navy, for we must not
 “rest only on the duties of a captain, but carry our
 “thoughts still further on, and never lose sight of
 “the worthy and brave example of such officers as
 “have distinguished~~ly~~ commanded in chief in the
 “service of their king and country. You will find
 “by the short sketch I shall here give you on this
 “head, that I have endeavoured, to the utmost of
 “my abilities, to let nothing escape my observation
 “worthy of notice, for your better knowledge and
 “improvement, without confining you at the same
 “time, to any formed partiality or bias to those only
 “rules which may agree, and experience may have
 “dictated; but to adhere or recede from them,
 “more or less, as your own future remarks may
 “give you opportunities to reject or improve, on
 “those hints already given. But before we enter
 “upon the subject of an *action* with the enemy, it
 “will be necessary to premise a few remarks proper
 “to be weighed and considered, and which, if pru-
 “dently attended to, may be found of infinite ser-
 “vice in the sequel. Where actions are greatly un-
 “equal, we learn from experience, (the surest guide
 “to follow,) that little can be done in general. The
 “weakest then, of necessity, must give way; there-
 “fore stratagem how to divert and elude your ene-
 “my

“ must be all your resource, but still not to neglect
 “ your utmost efforts by pointing your guns against
 “ your enemy’s masts, yards, and rigging; for other-
 “ wise, a small ship’s shot against the hull of a larger
 “ is but too often found mis-spending time and am-
 “ munition. Whereas a chance shot carrying away
 “ a mast or a yard, would facilitate your escape. It
 “ is proper however to observe to you, that before
 “ an officer enters upon *action*, he ought to make
 “ himself thoroughly acquainted with the manner
 “ of working a ship in all situations, and through all
 “ the variety of wind and weather, to be the better
 “ able to manage his ship with skill and alertness, in
 “ order to avail himself of every advantage an ene-
 “ my might give in the course of an engagement.
 “ Besides, the satisfaction it must give his *admiral* to
 “ see him working with judgement and address into
 “ his proper station, in forcing the line, or any other
 “ evolution that may be thought necessary for the
 “ fleet to perform; for the admiral will undoubtedly
 “ take every opportunity of exercising his *fleet* in the
 “ several evolutions, to satisfy himself how far he
 “ may depend on his captains against the day of
 “ battle, and take his measures accordingly, always
 “ preferring the good of the *service* in so important
 “ an *event* to every other consideration, either of
 “ *rank, interest, or seniority*, unless supported by su-
 “ perior merit and ability.”

I cannot

I cannot avoid adding here, (although many years after the foregoing letters were written,) as a strong proof of the great efficacy and advantage of good *discipline* in our navy, the great victory off Cape St. Vincent is a recent instance, which gave rise to the following interesting memorial between the *insolent* French Directory and the Court of Spain, in consequence of the said battle of the 14th of February, 1797, between the English and Spanish fleets, in which the *latter* were most shamefully defeated, although near double the number of the English, with the loss of two first-rate ships, the St. Joseph, of 112 guns, and the Santissima Trinidad, of 112 guns, and the St. Isidore and St. Nicolas, of 74 guns each.

State Papers relative to the victory by the British fleet under the command of the Earl of St. Vincent, over that of Spain, on the 14th of February, 1797.

Memorial presented by the French ambassador citizen Perinon, to the Spanish minister Don Godoz, at Madrid.

Most excellent Sir,

The directory having heard with astonishment the unexpected issue of the naval engagement between the Squadron of his Catholic Majesty and the English, I have it in command from them, that his most Catholic Majesty be made acquainted with the
real

real causes that contributed to the misfortune which with notorious *disgrace* to *its* honor, the *Spanish flag* has *sustained*. I, *most excellent* Sir, impressed with the confidence of your impartiality and uprightness, am persuaded you will prevent his Majesty from paying attention to false assertions, by which a detestable policy would wish to disguise an event so shameful, and thereby insure impunity, not discriminating between virtue and criminality. But lest his Majesty should unfortunately incline to believe the false excuses which the guilty never fail to avail themselves of in similar cases, I should not execute the trust reposed in me in the manner my nation has a right to expect, if I did not confute in the presence of his Majesty, those who attempt to confound truth with falsehood. Before that period arrives, I am commanded by the Executive Directory to have the honor of communicating to you what follows, for his Majesty's information. The Spanish arms, in all ages, have had the reputation of *superior valour, talents, and military skill*; and it is lately only that these have degenerated. They have now lost that pre-eminence, which, in the opinion of all Europe, they held for many centuries. It is from the debility of government (as in cases of disease,) that the state is infected and corrupted, therefore it is indispensably requisite, lest the whole body politic perish, that the pernicious seed be eradicated and consumed. Your *marine*, *most excellent* Sir, has
just

just given a most convincing proof of this indisputable truth. Instead of humbling the pride of the English, (already on the decline,) it has, by its late conduct, again raised their insolence to a most unparalleled height. For these weighty reasons your commerce (the support of your monarchy,) must suffer indelible loss. The whole nation holds in detestation your marine for this vile conduct, and sadly anticipate the misfortunes that must ensue. The fleet would not fight. Let the veil of treachery be withdrawn. The honor of your nation has been *bargained* and *sold*. This has been made known to the Directory, from certain and infallible documents. The Directory, that never loses sight of the honor of her allies, cannot see with indifference a stigma that must produce pernicious and lamentable consequences, *I*, in their name, require of your Excellency, that you will so dispose the mind of his Majesty, that with determined resolution he may punish this act, suppressing for a short time all paternal affection. This the undersigned hopes, and that your Excellency will give an answer to this memorial, which he may transmit to the Directory.

Signed,

PERINON.



Answer

Answer of the Spanish minister to a memorial or remonstrance presented by Citizen Perinon, French ambassador at Madrid, upon the defeat of the Spanish fleet off Cape St. Vincent, by the British fleet, on the 14th of February, 1797.

Citizen ambassador,

I have with great reluctance laid before the King the *heads* and *purport* of the memorial presented by your excellency in the name of the directory of the French Republic. I say the heads, (of the memorial,) because the language it contained is couched in terms so offensive, so debasing, and so *insolent* to the ears of a free people, that I deemed it quite inconsistent with the dignity of my station, to present it in the form in which it stood, to an independent sovereign.

The King, Sir, laments with great sincerity the unexpected and severe loss which has befallen his Majesty's arms in the late engagement with the British fleet; and is naturally led, in support of his own honor, as well as the honor of the Spanish nation, to make becoming enquiry into the cause of that misfortune; but he will not suffer for a moment the directory of the French Republic, nor any foreign power whatever, to assume a privilege of interfering with the concerns of his kingdom.

It is true as stated in the memorial of your masters, that the naval arms of Spain have hitherto been eminently distinguished amongst nations; and on
that

that account any humiliation at sea is felt with the greatest force and mortification by his Majesty ; but it cannot but seem very extraordinary to the King, and to his Majesty's subjects in general, that the loss of one action should be viewed as a matter of surprise by the French nation. Surely, Sir, the directory of the French Republic are not unacquainted with a naval defeat. They are pleased to observe, that the Spanish flag has suffered a remarkable disgrace to its honor ; and that they, as allies to his Catholic Majesty, cannot with indifference behold such turpitude. Are these gentlemen the members of the same assembly who embarked on board your fleet on the *three memorable days* of the 30th and 31st of May, and the 1st of June, 1794 ? Are these gentlemen the commissioners who assumed the rank of *naval field marshals* upon that occasion, who, before the commencement of the *action* with the British fleet, sent a frigate with an insolent message to each ship of your line, viz. "That the commissioners gave positive orders to the separate captains, that they were to sink to the bottom every English man of war excepting the *Royal Charlotte*, which carried the British commander's flag?" Out of their great mercy that ship they were to spare, but they were to bring her safe into the harbour of Brest, in order to grace the triumph of the *glorious new republic*. But who, instead of performing this act of heroism, were in the end very happy to make their escape

escape from the *cowardly* English, with the loss of nine capital ships. And are these the *gentlemen* who are prescribing to the King of Spain what punishment he is to inflict upon the commanders of the Spanish fleet for the loss of one battle, while the English have in their *possession* at this moment *one half of their navy*? We did not hear, Sir, of any punishment proposed by the *Directory* for the defeat of your *impregnable* fleet on the *first of June*. On the contrary it was asserted in that solemn assembly, that for the arms of France even to meet the English in an action at sea, it was of itself sufficient, and equal to a *victory*. I am stating here to your Excellency the history of three days only of the naval exploits of your republic; but almost every day since its commencement, might have accustomed the ears and the eyes of your directory to the turpitude of naval defeats; therefore, previous to your Excellency's approaching the presence of his Majesty, where you threaten to speak your opinion of the guilt of the officers who commanded his fleet, I would advise you as a friend and an ally to balance the disgrace of the two nations, to take in one hand the single defeat of the arms of Spain off the Capes of St. Vincent, whilst in the other you carry the various defeats and disgraces that have befallen the navy of the French Republic ever since the commencement of its career, and see which weighs the heaviest; your directory will then be convinced that

for either of our two nations to attempt to bring reproach upon the other for their inferiority to the *English* in naval skill and courage, is nothing else than to arraign the *wisdom* of the *Almighty power* who has thought it good and proper to grant the decided superiority upon the wide and extended ocean to that *brave people*.

The King, my master has in the mean time commanded me to signify to the members of the French Republic, that whether it be true or not that it is the infirmity of the government (as they state,) to be seized with certain cancers which contaminate and corrupt the state, it is not his Majesty's intention to follow the example of *regenerated* France, by applying *caustics* and the *knife* to remedy that evil. For which reason he has no occasion to suspend even for a moment the dictates of his paternal affection towards the subjects of his own states, which he is more than ever determined to cherish and cultivate; being firmly persuaded by his own *observation*, and which is confirmed to him by the historical experience of all nations, that no evil can be so great as to submit to the *tyranny* and *oppression* of a foreign government, nurtured and supported by the very *drags of the lowest orders of society*.



FINIS.

BETTON, PRINTER, PLYMOUTH.

